

An important historical value of the canonical *Vinaya* lies in its being a coherent expression of a particular Buddhist *mentalité*. It will only be after we have learned how to combine our interest in “what really happened” with a sensitivity to the changing thought-worlds of the Therāvada that we will begin to discern the historical reality behind the literary and archeological traces of ancient Buddhist monasticism.

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A NOTE ON DHAMMAPĀLA(S)

Of the works ascribed by tradition¹ to Dhammapāla, the *Paramatthamañjūsā* (*Visuddhimagga-mahā-ṭīkā*, abbr. Vism-mhṭ) and the *ṭīkā*s on the first three *nikāyas* (that on the *Aṅguttara* having presumably disappeared by the time of Sāriputta in the twelfth century) are usually assumed to be by the same author, referred to as Dhammapāla II: e.g., Mr Norman writes:²

“In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it seems reasonable to assume that the Gandhavaṃsa is correct in stating that the *ṭīkā*s to the Visuddhimagga and the four *nikāyas* are by the same person.”

Some authors follow tradition in identifying this author with the author of the *Paramatthadīpanī*, referred to by others as Dhammapāla I.

Near the beginning of Vism-mhṭ occurs the following passage:³

etth’ āha “kasmā panāyaṃ Visuddhimagga-kathā vatthu-pubbikā āraddhā, na Satthu-thomanāpubbikā ?” ti. vuccate “visuṃ asaṃvaṇṇanādibhāvato”: Sumaṅgalavilāsini-ādayo viya hi Dīghanikāy’-ādīnaṃ nāyaṃ visuṃ saṃvaṇṇanā, na pakaraṇantaraṃ vā Abhidhammāvatāra-Sumatāvatār’-ādi viya;

¹ E.g. *Gandhavaṃsa*, ed. J. Minayeff, *JPTS* 1886.

² *A History of Indian Literature*, ed. Jan Gonda, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, vol. VII *Buddhist and Jaina Literature*, fasc. 2 *Pali Literature*, including the Canonical Literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit of all Hīnayāna Schools of Buddhism, K. R. Norman, 1983, p. 149.

³ Buddhaghosācariya’s *Visuddhimagga* with *Paramatthamañjūsāṭīkā* of Bhadantācariya Dhammapāla, ed. [in Nāgarī] Dr Rewatadhamma, vol. I, 1969, Pāli-Granthamālā 3, Varanasi, p. 2.

tāsaṃ ye va pana Sumaṅgalavilāsinī-ādīnaṃ visesabhūtā; ten' ev' āha "majjhe Visuddhimaggo" ti ādi.⁴ atha vā thomaṇāpubbikā pi cāyaṃ kathā na vatthupubbikā vāti datṭhabbaṃ; sāsane hi vatthukittanaṃ na loke viya kevalaṃ hoti, sāsanasampattikittanattā pana Satthu-aviparītadhammadesanābhāva-vibhāvanena Satthu-guṇasaṃkittanaṃ ullīngantaṃ eva pavattati.

'Here [someone] says, "But why is this *Visuddhimagga* exposition started with its subject preceding, not with praise of the Teacher preceding ?" It is said [in reply], "Because separately it is not a commentary etc."; for it is not separately a commentary as the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* and so on are on the *Dīghanikāya* and so on, nor another treatise like the *Abhidhammāvatāra*, *Sumatāvatāra* and so on; but it is the superior part [?] of just those, the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* and so on; in just this sense [Buddhaghosa] said, "[For this] *Visuddhimagga*, [having stood] in the midst [also of the four *āgamas*, will illuminate the meaning as it is spoken there]." Or else, it should be seen that this exposition does also have praise preceding, not only the subject preceding; for, in the Teaching, praise of the subject is not exclusive, as in secular usage, but indeed from the praise of the excellency of the Teaching it proceeds exhibiting the praise of the Teacher's qualities by making clear the Teacher's nature of having his teaching of the Dhamma infallible.'

The author "doth protest too much, methinks".⁵ He clearly seems to feel that texts ought to start with verses of praise, and

⁴ *Majjhe Visuddhimaggo esa catunnaṃ pi āgamānaṃ hi Thatvā pakāsayissati tattha yathā bhāsitaṃ atthaṃ* (Sv 2,6-7, etc.).

⁵ Hamlet III ii.

therefore has to think up explanations for their absence in the *Visuddhimagga*. I find it hard to believe that he could have written the *nikāya ṭīkā*s, which have no such opening (the same is true of the *Netti ṭīkā* and the *anūṭīkā*).

Where do we go from here ? Do we now have yet another Dhammapāla ? The colophons and the close similarity of the opening and closing verses, and according to Father Pieris matters of thought and style as well, suggest Vism-mḥ was written by Dhammapāla I, but objections have been raised on chronological grounds; the matter clearly requires further research.⁶

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⁶ For a discussion of chronological and other questions see the following: Ven. Dr H. Saddhatissa (ed.), *Upāsakajanālaṅkāra*, PTS, 1965, Introduction, pp. 28 foll.; Dr (Mrs) Lily de Silva (ed.), *Dīghanikāyaṭṭhakathāṭīkā*, PTS, 1970, vol. I, Introduction, pp. xli-lv; L. S. Cousins, "Dhammapāla and the ṭīkā literature" [review article on the above], *Religion* 2 (1972), pp. 159-65; Aloysius Pieris S.J., "The colophon to the Paramatthamañjūsā and the discussion on the date of Ācariya Dhammapāla" in *Buddhism in Ceylon and Studies on Religious Syncretism in Buddhist Countries* (Symposien zur Buddhismusforschung, I), Report on a Symposium in Göttingen, ed. Heinz Bechert, *Abh. Akad. Wiss. Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Klasse*, Dritte Folge Nr. 108, 1978, pp. 61-77; A. K. Warder, "Some problems of the later Pali literature", *JPTS* 1981, pp. 198-207.